



March 1, 2023

Chairman McGregor, Chairman Currey and members of the Education Committee. My name is Derek Puorro. I am President of the Council 4 AFSCME Public Safety Council. I am also a lieutenant in the Middletown Police Department. Our union represents 1,900 Connecticut municipal police officers.

Council 4 AFSCME does have serious concerns about Senate Bill 1095, An Act Concerning School Resource Officers. We would very much like to see the language that would apply to how police officers acting as SROs do their jobs in a memorandum of understanding. Police officers' duties are pretty clearly spelled out in state statute and regulation. The current language seems to state a concept but not much detail.

We are proud of our school resource officer members. They interact successfully and positively with Connecticut's public school children every day. We are not aware of any problems with our members, how they perform on the job and their relationships with school children.

We are aware of out-of-state incidents where SROs acted inappropriately or were used inappropriately. We urge the committee and legislature to please make the distinction between what might happen in Minnesota, or Missouri and what happens in Connecticut.

We try to not be reactive, but it is difficult to comment on a bill when we are unable to see what impact it may have on our members and how they perform their jobs. Our SRO members work closely with counselors, school administrators, students, teachers, para educators and other staff. We do not understand how counselors would become SROs. We would like to understand more fully what the sponsors of the bill have in mind.

As always, we are willing to listen and hear what legislators are thinking. As it is, this bill leaves us not quite understanding its intent.

Thank you for considering our thoughts. We are happy to answer any questions about the job that our SRO members do.